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ABSTRACT

This systematic planning guide is intended to assist early childhood teachers in planning the educational program and in designing classroom activities. In addition, New Jersey educators will find it helpful in complying with state requirements. Guidelines are presented in the following areas: (1) establishing a philosophy; (2) developing goals; (3) assessing children's needs (informal, norm-referenced, and criterion-referenced measures); (4) developing objectives; (5) designing the educational program (organization by areas of child development and by curriculum areas); (6) implementing educational activities (teacher role, student role, resources needed, and where and when activities take place); and (7) evaluating the educational program (progress reports on children, program reports by teachers and staff, reports on the class or center, and information from parents). A sample work plan is offered for each of four child development areas: physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development. Each plan provides a goal, broad objective, specific objective, activity, and list of materials/resources. A six-item list of references is included. Appendices include the New Jersey State Board of Education's statements on the principles and philosophy of early childhood education and a directory of sources of written materials including nine New Jersey state sources and ten national sources. (DC)

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New Jersey Department of Education

PLANNING AN EDUCATIONAL
PROGRAM FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

Early Childhood Education Resource Guides

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Abstract

Early Childhood Education Resource Guides

New Jersey State Department of Education

The Early Childhood Education Resource Guides consist of three related booklets: Planning an Educational Program for Young Children; Planning for Parental Involvement in Early Childhood Education; and Easing the Child's Transition Between Home, Child Care Center and School. Written for teachers and administrators of preschool, kindergarten, and primary classes, the booklets present principles and planning steps which are generic to all programs for the education and care of young children.

Purposes and content of the three guides are as follows:

Planning an Educational Program for Young Children is a systematic planning guide designed to assist early childhood teachers in two of their major responsibilities--planning the educational program and designing classroom activities.

Planning for Parental Involvement in Early Childhood Education provides assistance in developing objectives and activities for parental involvement as one component in the total program of early childhood education.

Easing the Child's Transition Between Home, Child Care Center and School is designed to help teachers in preschool programs and kindergartens to enhance communication and cooperation among themselves, so that young children may more easily adapt to the differing environments in which they develop and learn.

Planning an Educational Program For Young Children

A PLANNING GUIDE FOR TEACHERS IN
SCHOOLS & CHILD CARE CENTERS

Published by:
New Jersey State Department of Education
225 West State Street
CN 500
Trenton, New Jersey 08625

PLANNING AN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

A Planning Guide for Teachers
in Schools and Child Care Centers

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PREFACE

This booklet is a product of the Interdepartmental Capacity-Building Project, a program through which two departments of state government--Education and Human Services--have worked cooperatively in areas of mutual interest and responsibility. During 1978-79, the project included a pilot study in which the quality of child care center programs was analyzed and evaluated by teachers and parents of young children. Six components were identified as significant for planning and evaluating early childhood programs: the educational program, adult-child interaction, staff relations, parent participation, staff training, and allied services. These components were incorporated into A Self-Study Process for Preschool Programs (Warrence and Kornegay, 1980), which provides teaching staff and parents with procedures for determining priorities and evaluating progress toward chosen objectives.

In this booklet, principles guiding the educational program and teacher-child interaction are adapted and applied in a systematic planning model, which can assist early childhood educators in strengthening the educational services which they offer children and their parents. Another handbook, Planning for Parent Involvement in Early Childhood Education (Frierson and Hills, 1981), addresses parent participation. Both guides provide principles and steps for planning, examples of program components, and resource lists.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Thoughtful planning, implementing, and evaluating are fundamental to the success of early childhood education. Time spent in careful planning yields many benefits -- a smoother day-to-day operation, more confident and relaxed teachers, and a better chance of achieving objectives.

This booklet is a systematic planning guide designed to assist early childhood teachers in two of their major responsibilities -- planning the educational program and designing classroom activities. Since the principles and planning steps described herein are generic to all programs for the education and care of young children, they can be used by teachers, administrators, and educational planning committees working in child care centers, prekindergartens, kindergartens, and primary classes. Teachers will find the suggestions in the guide helpful in complying with state requirements for establishing goals and objectives and in designing an educational plan.[1] In the same way, child care center personnel will find guidance in designing curriculum plans required for a licensed child care center.[2]

II. ESTABLISHING A PHILOSOPHY

Underlying all educational planning is a basic philosophy or set of beliefs and values in early childhood education. The philosophy reflects the values of those who are concerned with the education of the young children in the program: parents, teachers, administrators, board members, social service workers, health personnel, and community members. Before educational planning can begin, a representative group of these persons should be formed to determine the beliefs and intent of the program and set them down in a written statement. Such a process requires ample time for discussion, reflection, review, and revision.

The philosophy will include beliefs about children's development and learning and understandings about their physical, emotional, social, and cognitive needs. The statement of philosophy will provide a rationale for all aspects of the early childhood educational program, helping teachers plan a program that reflects the convictions of the representative group. It is important that the teacher's own basic philosophy of early childhood education be compatible with that of the school or center and the community.

An example of a written philosophy is found in the Appendix, page 18-20. This statement of "Principles and Philosophy for Early Childhood Education," adopted by the New Jersey State Board of Education in 1979, states beliefs about the nature of children, the responsibilities of teachers and parents for their learning and development, the ways in which they learn, and the kinds of experiences which are important and necessary for their education.

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[1] See N.J.S.A. 18A:7A-1 et seq. and Administrative Code provisions in N.J.A.C. 6:8-1.1 et seq.

[2] See Manual of Standards for Child Care Centers -- regulations under N.J.S.A. 18A:70-1 to 9 and N.J.S.A. 30:1-25.

III. DEVELOPING GOALS

Goals are derived from the overall philosophy of a center, school, or school system. They clarify what is to be accomplished, and they help to ensure that early childhood education programs respond to the needs of children and the expectations of parents and communities.

An example of a goal statement is the following.[3]

The early childhood educational program will help children to:

... communicate effectively with adults and peers

... solve problems and make decisions

... broaden their knowledge and awareness of the environment

... grow in ability to communicate real experiences through symbols

... develop socially appropriate ways of expressing basic feelings

... develop and expand their physical capabilities

... play and interact with peers in a variety of ways

... develop effective health and nutritional practices

... contribute to the family and community in ways appropriate to their ages

... enjoy the process of learning and growing from one stage of development to another.

... develop, appreciate, and expand their artistic and creative interests and abilities

... develop an increasing sensitivity to art and beauty

Since young children grow, develop, and learn as whole beings, the broad goals of an early childhood program should encompass their cognitive, physical, social, and emotional development. Subsequent statements of objectives and selection of learning activities should reflect that responsibility.

However, it is not necessary for a center or school to give all goals equal emphasis. A program may place priority on certain selected areas consistent with its philosophy, demonstrating their importance with more detailed or elaborated goals. For instance, one program for children of preschool age may stress social development, while another may emphasize artistic expression.

Those who plan the program should be sure that the goal statements are clear and sufficiently broad to allow for the desired outcomes. The goal statements should be made available to parents, teachers, administrative staff, and community members.

[3]These goals are compatible with the overall goals for the public education system in New Jersey, as stated in N.J.A.C. 6:8-1.1 et seq.

IV. ASSESSING NEEDS

Effective program planning requires information about the enrolled children in regard to expectations based on normal child development and on the goals of the programs. Assessment helps the teacher know the status of each child's development in various areas. It helps to identify needs of individuals and groups and becomes the basis for developing objectives and selecting appropriate activities.

There are many ways to observe and assess what children can do confidently, what they know, what they enjoy, and what they find difficult. Teachers may select and purchase assessment instruments, or they may design their own measurement strategies.

Good assessment is based on several different ways of measuring children's behavior. No one measure, however valid, is sufficient. Since young children are sensitive to their environments and express themselves more naturally and comfortably in one mode than in another, one sampling of behavior is not a sufficiently reliable indicator of a child's abilities. By varying the assessment methods and by observing the children in a variety of activities, teachers can obtain reliable information for tailoring the pr gram to each child's strengths and needs.

A. Informal Assessment Measures

Many teachers of young children feel comfortable with informal assessment methods which cause little or no disruption in the children's normal schedule. Much helpful information on children's needs, knowledge, and abilities can be obtained as a part of the regular classroom activities and ongoing interaction between teachers and parents, through such means as the following:

... parent questionnaires, interviews. conferences

... teacher observations

... checklists, teacher-made or commercial

... anecdotal records

... portfolios of children's work

... case studies

... health records

... daily charted progress cards

... log of child's daily activities.

Informal measures of children's behavior focus attention on their total development and help to ensure that the assessment procedures have a scope adequate for planning for individual children.

B. Norm-Referenced & Criterion-Referenced Assessment

Norm-referenced and criterion-referenced instruments provide two different ways of measuring what children can do and what information they have. A norm-referenced assessment includes evaluations of a child's behavior and/or skills in terms of what is considered normal achievement for most children of similar ages and circumstances. The results of norm-referenced tests are used to report a child's achievement in comparison with others of his/her age or educational level or to set an achievement standard.

A criterion-referenced test measures the individual child's skills in terms of specific tasks or objectives important to his or her success in the program. A child's score on a criterion-referenced measure is compared to his or her previous performance, and it identifies his/her current status. This kind of measurement is used to show how well a child can perform particular tasks or the number or percentage of children who can perform that task or group of tasks.

Both criterion and norm-referenced tests are commercially available. Teachers can also devise their own criterion-referenced measures. Either tool will serve as one gauge of normal child development.

Since educational tests and measures are widely publicized and readily available, some precautions should be taken for their selection and use. Tests requiring use of paper and pencils are inappropriate in planning for young children, because they tend to have short attention spans, are not highly motivated to complete such abstract tasks, are disinterested in competition, and may fatigue quickly or distract easily.[4] A clear distinction must be made between using the assessment information in planning and using the instruments or procedures themselves as instructional units. Assessment is primarily for the purposes of program planning. Teaching children information and skills required for success on a test limits classroom activity and learning and makes the assessment tool less valid.

All programs should recognize the needs of individual children. Information from assessment procedures helps teachers decide what needs to be emphasized in the program and what kinds of learning activities will match children's needs and fulfill the intent of the program.

V. DEVELOPING OBJECTIVES

Having assessed the children and identified their strengths and needs, the teacher has a basis for specifying the ways in which the goals of the program are to be accomplished. Objectives should express in clear, concrete terms what the results of the program will be: what children will be able to do or say, how they will use their bodies differently, how their behavior towards other persons will change, etc.

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[4]The New Jersey State Department of Education (N.J.S.D.E. Branch of Basic Skills, 1979) neither requires nor recommends this kind of testing for state purposes for children below the third grade, although it does mandate an assessment of all newly enrolled pupils.

The broad program objectives should include each of the developmental areas --physical, social, emotional, and cognitive. They should be suitable for the class or group, and they should be based on the particular children's individual needs. The broad objectives provide the basis for the specific objectives incorporated in a daily activity or lesson plan.

Some broad objectives suitable in an early childhood program for five year olds are incorporated in the following statement:

> As a result of the early childhood educational program the children will be able to:
>
> ... practice and demonstrate awareness of effective health and nutritional habits, e.g., by washing hands and face, covering the nose and mouth when sneezing/coughing, eating foods from the four basic food groups, and dressing appropriately for the weather
>
> ... involve themselves in diverse forms of group play, e.g., in role play, blocks, construction activities, and free indoor and outdoor play
>
> ... express a positive self concept through individual and small group discussion, art activities, singing, acting, dancing, and group play, etc.
>
> ... communicate developing concepts and feelings about their physical environment, space, time, seasonal changes, animals, plants, etc., through language, movement, and other expressive activities.

Well-written objectives provide a strong basis for selecting learning activities and for evaluating the program. In effective planning, the development of objectives is an essential component, moving the educational process smoothly to the next step.

VI. DESIGNING THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

Many educational programs for young children focus primarily on child development. Others organize the learning activities around curriculum areas. Either approach can result in effective programs. Choice of an organizational scheme is related to the philosophy of the program and its objectives, the preparation of the teachers, and the personal preference of those involved in planning. The following descriptions contrast the two models.

A. Organization By Areas of Child Development

Often teachers of preschool children organize educational components on the basis of physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development. These teachers use teacher-child interactions, instructional materials and equipment to help children acquire and practice a wide range of skills.

For example, large motor development may be encouraged through the use of equipment such as climbers and blocks, and fine motor development through the use of clay and pegs. Social development may be enhanced by having items associated with family activity in a learning center. Emotional development may be facilitated by expressive activities such as finger painting. Water play with measuring cups, funnels, food coloring, etc., can foster cognitive development. Language acquisition is stimulated throughout the early childhood program as children describe, question, and discuss, guided continually by the teacher's presence, commentary, questions, and use of stories and reference materials.

B. Organization By Curriculum Areas

Other teachers focus on learning activities in specified areas of curriculum content, e.g., language arts, science, math, social studies, music, art, health, and nutrition.

These teachers may seek to enhance language skills and reading readiness through role play materials, pictures, and children's dictated stories. Mathematics instruction may be based on children's experiences with measuring, counting, and discriminating shapes and sizes. In science, teachers may include experiments with water, sand, magnifying glasses, simple machines, animals, insects, and plants. They will organize the entire educational program by content labels, although the children's activities and the materials they use may be similar to those used by teachers who organize by developmental domains.

Selection of materials and equipment should be based on the kind of educational program to be implemented and on the abilities and interests of the children who will use them. An effective program, however, does not depend on large amounts of equipment. More oral language may be stimulated when children are sitting together working with clay and conversing freely than through the use of audio equipment. In such a situation the teacher may sit with the children - extending, clarifying, enriching concepts, or simply listening. Technological equipment augments but does not replace an active, concerned teacher.

VII. IMPLEMENTING THE EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Having planned carefully all the preceding steps, the teacher is now prepared to carry out the plan. Implementation involves attention to several essential processes: what the teacher will do, what the children will do, what equipment and materials are needed, and where and when the activities will take place.

A. What the Teacher Will Do

Interaction between teacher and children is indispensable in an effective educational program. The ways in which teachers work with young children are determined by the goals and objectives of the program and the characteristics of the children enrolled. Examples of adult-child interactions and strategies which help an educational program attain its objectives are as follows:

... Teachers can foster physical development by providing a variety of activities for small and large muscles; having adequate supervision

for special activities involving tools, electrical appliances, etc.; developing and enforcing consistent limits for safety; maintaining adult-child ratios appropriate to developmental levels; and assigning teachers to activity areas according to the children's physical abilities and need for adult supervision.

... Teachers can assure progress in social development by integrating the children's personal experiences into the program, listening and responding to children, encouraging and praising the efforts of each child, fostering interpersonal relationships, and offering children information about the special needs of individuals.

... Teachers can encourage emotional development by demonstrating responsiveness to the needs of individual children, accepting their feelings, helping children express feelings in socially acceptable ways, providing one to one adult-child interaction, and assuring that the same teachers work consistently with a group of young children.

... Teachers can aid children's cognitive development by having small group instruction, using equipment and materials which arouse interest and curiosity, arranging for children to confront problems and novel situations, encouraging children to observe and think about real phenomena, and engaging children in talking about their experiences.

B. What the Children Will Do

The learning activities which teachers select should be based on the children's identified abilities and needs:

... For identified needs in children's physical/motor development, children can be encouraged to practice body movement through free play, outdoor play when possible, varied locomotion from one activity to another (e.g., skipping, galloping, etc.), movement to music, and opportunities for fine motor coordination, (e.g., such as zippering, snapping, stringing beads, working with puzzles, etc.).

... When assessment has shown needs in social development, children can be engaged in small and large group interaction, such as dramatic play (housekeeping), shopping, etc., free outdoor and indoor play, role plays of favorite stories, simple circle games, puppet shows, and water and sand play.

... For emotional development, children may need help in learning to verbalize feelings. They can discuss their feelings about characters in a story, play, movie or picture; can gain facility in recognizing anger, happiness, fear, etc., and expressing it in words; and can express such emotions through creative art work, woodworking, music, dance, original stories, etc.

... In measuring children's levels of understanding people, events, and natural phenomena, the teacher may have concluded that there were particular needs in cognitive development. The teacher may then provide experiences that enhance curiosity and encourage children to confront problems and discover solutions, through using sight, hearing, taste, touch, and smell to explore objects and the physical environment; seeing, manipulating, and talking about shapes, colors, textures, and sizes in a variety of materials; interacting with people and materials new to them; and comparing, contrasting, and classifying objects along varied dimensions.

C. What Resources Are Needed

In carrying out the program plan, teachers must know their resources: What equipment and materials are already at hand? How appropriate are they for the children's needs and interests? What additions or modifications are desirable?

When funds are limited, program planners should develop cost-effective strategies for stretching resource budgets to cover needs. Durable equipment purchased from reputable companies which specialize in early childhood materials is a wise investment. Comparison-shopping may help educators acquire materials of good quality for relatively low prices. Parents and community members may donate sturdy outgrown toys and usable household articles such as magnets, clocks, timers, plastic pails, tubs, etc. Teachers are more likely to receive appropriate items if they send a "want list" home with the children. Volunteers, parents, teachers, and other interested persons can cooperate to create and build equipment for the classroom.

Parents are among the most valuable resources a program can have. For ideas on how to involve parents in helping to fulfill objectives for the children, early childhood teachers may consult Planning for Parental Involvement in Early Childhood Education (Frierson and Hills, 1981).

Appropriate in-service training topics and techniques should be developed to assist teachers in implementing the program. A wide variety of resources, ranging from materials to workshops and classes, is available to teachers to augment their previous training and experience.[5]

The community has many valuable resources. Ideas and guidelines for using community resources may be found in the booklet Working With Community Resources (New Jersey State Department of Education, 1979). When parents, staff, children, and community members work together, there is a greater likelihood that the resources for the program will be adequate, that objectives will be met, and that enthusiasm and support will be strong.

D. Where & When the Learning Activities Take Place

Specific plans for where, when, and how the learning activities are to take place bring together all the components involved in planning an educational program.

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[5]See sources for written materials, Appendix, pages 21-23.

Planning activities for children's learning is easier when teachers use stated program goals and compatible objectives. Where possible, teachers will want to incorporate inter-related objectives in order to foster children's total development. Careful thought and written plans serve to ensure better program organization and management and to clarify purposes for staff and parents.

E. Examples of Work Plans

On the following pages, sample work plans are presented. Each of these examples shows a program goal, a related broad objective, a specific objective, teacher behaviors, children's activities, and supplies needed. In adapting such plans, teachers will need to identify classroom space and necessary furniture, to decide which children will be engaged in the activity, and to plan for the scheduling of the learning experience.

1. Physical development

Goal: In the early childhood program, a child will be able to develop and expand his/her physical capabilities.

Broad Objective: Children will demonstrate increased motor/physical skill in a variety of ways.

OBJECTIVE	ACTIVITY	MATERIALS/RESOURCES
The children will play follow the leader through movements which include walking, climbing, jumping, crawling, short sprinting, etc.	Have the children walk at various rates, climb low hills, jump narrow trenches, holes or objects, and run short distances between specified points in a park or suitable area. Verbalize some spatial orientation experiences, such as, "Let's crawl under the slide, stand in front (or back) of the tree, hold the paper on our heads (or above our heads), while we jump over the stick, hide inside the box."	Children should wear suitable clothing for weather and physical activity (e.g., sweaters, long pants, and laced, sturdy shoes.) In an indoor version, simple gym equipment (balance beams, saw horses, walking boards, hollow blocks, etc.) may be provided.

2. Social development

Goal: The early childhood educational program will help a child to solve problems and make decisions.

Broad Objective: The children will be able to solve simple interpersonal problems.

OBJECTIVE	ACTIVITY	MATERIALS/RESOURCES
Through free choice, children will share manipulative and gross motor equipment.	Allow 30-50 minutes for self-directed activities that provide for small group interaction. Prepare the environment in accordance with the individual needs of the children and the particular interests/ plans for the group. Move from group to group, interacting with the children, promoting discussions and asking questions that help children to help each other, take turns, share ideas, admire and respect each other's work, empathize with feelings, enter group activities, etc.	A variety of materials and equipment should be available. Examples are: manipulative, equipment, e.g., puzzles, story books, legos, peg boards, and play dough; gross motor equipment, e.g., climbers, balls, and bikes; sociodramatic play equipment, e.g., blocks and family play equipment.

3. Emotional development

Goal: The children will develop socially appropriate ways of expressing their basic feelings.

Broad Objective: The early childhood program will enable children to express their thoughts and feelings about classroom activities.

OBJECTIVE	ACTIVITY	MATERIALS/RESOURCES
When participating in a woodwork experience, children will share equipment, letting others know when they are finished with a tool, in order to learn to wait, take turns, and verbalize feelings.	With a small group of children, plan and build a bird feeding station. Have the children take turns helping each other (one holds the wood while the other hammers the nail), rotate the jobs of measuring, sawing, nailing, sanding, painting, etc. Encourage children to tell their peers when they have finished using the tool. Using experience charts, develop several short stories dictated by the children, which describe the evolvement of the project from the planning stage to its completion. Each could be illustrated with step by step photos (or children's illustrations) that end with the birds feeding.	Work bench or table, cross cut saw, claw hammer, vise or C-clamp, nails, all purpose glue, paint, brushes, shellac, tape measure, sand paper, wood scraps (soft pine is best), wild bird seed, optional camera, and film or paper and paint.

4. Cognitive development

Goal: In the early childhood education program, children will broaden their knowledge and awareness of the environment.

Broad Objective: As a result of the child's experiences, the child will enlarge and extend concepts and ideas about the physical properties of matter.

OBJECTIVE	ACTIVITY	MATERIALS/RESOURCES
While mixing ingredients and forming play dough, children will be encouraged to use their five senses to investigate and describe the raw ingredients and will be helped to describe the changes that take place as the ingredients are combined.	Using flour, salt, and water, let the children measure and mix the ingredients, encouraging them to describe the taste, smell, feel, sight, and sound of the ingredients before and after they are mixed together. Ask questions and encourage discussions that extend and enrich concepts of quantities, i.e., volume, numbers, blending of colors, etc. Encourage use of the appropriate vocabulary as children discover that some ingredients dissolve when mixed, while others remains suspended.	2 cups flour 1 cup salt 1 cup water food coloring (enough for 4-5 children depending upon age) Large pan or unbreakable bowl.

VIII. EVALUATING THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

The best-laid plans may go awry at times. Teachers must look for evidence that their objectives are being met. Ongoing evaluation will help to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the program both while it is in progress and at its end.

Information from multiple sources helps teachers and administrators measure the worth of the educational program to the children, the parents, and staff. Just as no single method of assessing children is sufficiently reliable and valid, no single evaluative method is sufficient. The following sources provide evaluation data:

A. Progress Reports on Children

- samples of children's work collected from various interest areas and at different times in the program year.
- anecdotal records
- observation reports
- pre and post-checklists of criterion-referenced or norm-referenced measurement instruments
- other measures of children's performance or achievement
- tape recordings or video-tapes of children at typical activities in different time periods
- written progress reports
- health and cumulative records

B. Program Reports by Teachers & Staff

- evaluation of lesson plans and units
- reviews and reports of articles read (e.g., newsletters, newspapers, journals, magazines)
- lists of workshops and conferences attended
- reports of visits to other classes and centers
- staff evaluation reports

C. Reports on the Class or Center

- reports of monitoring and evaluation visits
- lists of visitors, guests, and resource persons

- philosophy, goals, objectives, and assessment data
- studies of the total program by a committee comprised of staff, parents, and others[6]

D. Information From Parents

- parent-teacher conferences
- telephone interviews and written questionnaires
- discussion during parent meetings
- informal, spontaneous communication about children's behavior and comments at home
- comments based on observation of the classroom activities and/or involvement in the classroom
- reports on follow-up of class activities at home

A variety of evaluation methods can identify the variables which make a program effective. The teachers evaluate not only the children's growth, but also such program components as teaching methods, adult-child interaction, parent involvement, peer interaction, planning procedures, and materials and equipment. Evaluation processes can inform teachers about the impact of a program on children and the worth of the planned learning activities. As a result of careful evaluation, planning can begin anew, based on the additional, updated information about what children need in relation to what teachers and parents desire for them.

[6]An example of this approach is described in The Self-Study Process for Pre-school Programs (Warrence and Kornegay, 1980).

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New Jersey Department of Human Services, Division of Youth and Family Service, Bureau of Licensing. Manual of Standards for Child Care Centers. Trenton, New Jersey: Bureau of Licensing, January, 1981.

Warrence, B. and Kornegay, L. A Self-Study Process for Preschool Programs. Trenton, New Jersey: State Department of Education, Division of School Programs, Office of Early Childhood, 1980.

APPENDICES

A. Principles and Philosophy of the State Board of Education

B. Sources for Written Materials

STATEMENT OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Principles of Early Childhood Education

...Individual children are unique, although the processes of development are universal.

...Development is continuous. At any given time, the state of development implies that there are limits on the interests and abilities of children.

...Learning is an active process. It is natural for young children to be eager learners, active both mentally and physically.

...The child is a member of the family. Early childhood education complements family life. Parents have a stake in the education of children. Positive involvement of parents can enhance children's educational experiences.

...Early educational experiences can serve to strengthen and enrich a young child's current status, preventing or reducing a need for subsequent remediation.

...It is urgent to match educational efforts with the developmental readiness of children.

...Programs should be responsive to the needs of young children. Assessment is for purposes of program planning, rather than for child placement.

...The role of the teacher is of critical importance. Teachers give practical effect to the educational intent. They bring together the program and the child.

...Early childhood programs must reflect the plural nature of our society and the ethnic and language diversity in our state.

...It is the role of the State Board, working through the State Department of Education, to set policy for early childhood education. This role cannot be abrogated to funding sources.

A Statement of Philosophy

The goal of early childhood education is to involve young children in an educational process which enhances their childhood experiences and which, continued throughout their childhood and youth, will help them to become responsible adults.

The educational process affects human beings in many ways: intellectual development, personality formation, social relationships, expression through the arts, and physical growth and development. There are a variety of influences in the educational process. At no time is this more evident than during the period of early childhood. The family provides the first and most lasting effects. Schools contribute the longest and most continuous influence outside the home. A number of other agencies and institutions also have valid interests in the socialization of children and in their development and welfare. Cooperation between all concerned parties is essential to the best possible growth, development, and learning of young children.

Planning educational programs for young children and providing leadership in their development and operation are responsibilities of the educational system. Schools have a unique role in the education of children. In addition to basic skills and knowledge, schools teach children about themselves and others, about their communities, about citizenship, and about work. Effective early childhood education should assist all enrolled children to attain subsequent school success, even as it helps each child reach his or her potential intellectually, socially, physically, and emotionally.

Young children are eager and curious learners, endowed by nature with a spontaneous interest in exploring, inquiring, and experimenting. Play is one of the distinctive ways in which young children attempt to make sense of their experiences. Along with language and other symbolic activities, imaginative play provides a necessary way for young children to observe events, interact with persons and objects, and develop understanding. Programs of early childhood education should provide a curriculum with a combination of concrete learning experience, adult assistance, and time appropriate to the developmental levels of the children.

The acquisition of certain academic skills and understandings is determined by natural patterns of maturing and by previous experience matched to new experience. The workable mix cannot be achieved by undue emphasis on any one of the factors. Just as there is no point in teaching children what they already know, it is futile to attempt to teach them what they are as yet unable to do. It is essential to design programs which reflect our knowledge of the growth patterns of young children and to observe and respect individual differences within those patterns. Assessment of children's strengths and needs can contribute to the development of appropriate educational experiences. Planning for early childhood education should include variety in program formats, in instructional approaches, and in provision of opportunities for children and families to be involved in educational experiences.

The effectiveness of education is enhanced through the meaningful involvement of families. Parents must participate in decisions pertaining to the planning, implementation, and evaluation of educational programs designed for young children. New Jersey children reflect the varied ethnic and language composition of our population. Their diversity and that of their families are a source of pride and strength. Varied programs are necessary to meet the diverse needs of children and communities, even as we educate all children to assume a rightful, responsible place in society.

In the final analysis, teachers embody the words of statements of philosophy. They become the means of delivering planned educational experiences to children. Personal and professional qualifications for teachers of young children must be high and selection procedures stringent. In both pre-service and in-service training, early childhood teachers should study young children and their families, practice ever-improving strategies of instructing them, analyze curricular approaches, and engage in evaluation of their own efforts and the progress of children. The participation of classroom teachers in the development of curricula is essential.

Through early childhood education, we can enrich the life experiences of children, and we may circumvent the need for remediation, which is costly in human terms and in material resources. Timing and content of the programs must be tailored to child needs and educational purposes. Often, local district classes for young children, particularly for four-year olds, rely on federal programs and grants. However, we cannot abrogate our responsibilities to these sources. We must assert leadership in utilizing such resources for our own priorities for young children in New Jersey.

P. Paul Ricci
President, State Board of Education

Fred G. Burke
Secretary, State Board of Education

June 6, 1979

Sources for Written Materials

You may request a list of selected publications pertaining to early childhood education and child development from the following:

State Sources

COMMUNITY COORDINATED CHILD CARE
105 Presidential Boulevard
Paterson, New Jersey 07522

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE
Cook College
Rutgers University
P.O. Box 231
New Brunswick, New Jersey 08903

DAIRY COUNCIL, INC.
1225 Industrial Highway
Southampton, Pennsylvania 18966

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
Division of Youth and Family Services
Bureau of Licensing
1 South Montgomery Street
Trenton, New Jersey 08625

EDUCATIONAL IMPROVEMENT CENTER
Office of County and Regional Services
Office of the Deputy Commissioner
New Jersey State Department of Education
225 West State Street, Box 2019
Trenton, New Jersey 08625

NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Division of School Programs
Bureau of Curriculum
Office of Early Childhood
225 West State Street
Trenton, New Jersey 08625

NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
Special Child Health Services
P.O. Box 1540
Trenton, New Jersey 08625

NATIONAL PUBLIC SCHOOL RELATIONS ASSOCIATION
1801 North Moore Street
Arlington, New Jersey 22209

SUPERINTENDENT OF DOCUMENTS
U.S. Government Printing Office
Washington, D.C. 20402

National Sources

AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION
50 East Huron Street
Chicago, Illinois 60611

ASSOCIATION FOR CHILDHOOD EDUCATION INTERNATIONAL
3615 Wisconsin Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20016

ASSOCIATION FOR SUPERVISION AND CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT
225 N. Washington Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

CHILD WELFARE LEAGUE OF AMERICA
67 Irving Place
New York, New York 10003

CHILDREN'S BUREAU
Office of Child Development
P.O. Box 1182
Washington, D.C. 20013

ERIC-EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION
University of Illinois
College of Education
805 West Pennsylvania Avenue
Urbana, Illinois 61801

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE EDUCATION OF YOUNG CHILDREN
1834 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20009

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS, INC.
18 Tremont Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02108

NATIONAL BLACK CHILD DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE
1463 Rhode Island Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20005

NATIONAL CLEARING HOUSE FOR BILINGUAL EDUCATION
1300 Wilson Boulevard
Suite B2-11
Bosslyn, Virginia 22209